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**1962/10/19**

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# EXCISE

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I - AIR STRIKE SCENARIO, OCTOBER 19, 1962

The Military Program

This plan would call for a surprise strike aimed at medium range missiles, surface to air missiles, and high performance aircraft and nuclear storage sites in Cuba. The object would be to ensure by conventional means the most rapid and complete removal of any operational capability in these fields. This operation should be followed by continual close surveillance and very promptly by a blockade in which all Bloc shipping would be turned back and imports of fuel prohibited. The alternative of omitting the blockade is not recommended, because of the danger of a recreated threat. The alternative of a strike limited to known missile sites is no longer recommended even by those who first proposed it because of the dangers presented by a surviving and substantial air capability. This build-up should be hit as a whole complex, or not at all.

Schedule of Public Statements

Intelligence estimates put a high premium on maximum tactical surprise, but political considerations at home and abroad dictate some minimum announcement that medium range missiles are being installed in Cuba. The current recommendation is that there should be a White House announcement of the introduction of such missiles early Monday evening. This statement would also announce that the

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President was recalling the Congress to a special session to meet on Thursday morning. This announcement would be followed by a brief Presidential statement on all networks Tuesday morning at the time the strike begins and the announcement presently would be completed by a Presidential TV address by mid-morning Tuesday.

Notice to Khrushchev and Castro - Alternative 1

It is recommended that no advance notice be given to Khrushchev. The principal point here is that there is no notice to which he cannot make a politically damaging reply, and no serious advantage ingiving him any precise advance indication of a course which is inevitable. We have been unable to draft any advance warning which would carry conviction either in the following days of crises or in history.

There should, however, be a carefully drafted statement to Khrushchev delivered approximately simultaneously with the air strike. This message would carry much of the President's argument in his later public speech. It would carefully define and delimit the grounds and the extent of the military operation with special emphasis on its conventional character. It would renew and reemphasize the depth and intensity of the United States commitment to defend Berlin by all necessary means. It would include an urgent invitation to a Summit meeting. It might also include a statement that

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while we are currently treating these as Cuban missiles, any nuclear use of them would have to be regarded as an act of the Soviet Government.

The problem of notice to Castro is different. It is his country which will come under attack, and it is best from our point of view to focus responsibility on him. At some time between the White House statement of Monday evening and the air strike a message should be delivered to the Cuban representative in the UN which would indicate plainly that what we now know is completely inconsistent with Cuban assurances, Soviet statements, and our own clearly announced position; thus it will now be necessary for us to take appropriate steps. The military preference is that warning to Cuba should be given not more than 2 hours before attack if tactical surprise is not to be jeopardized.

Notice to Khrushchev and Castro - Alternative 2

On the political side there is a strong feeling that a real advance communication to Khrushchev and Castro is needed, if the United States is not to be marked as a reckless aggressor and this Administration cursed forever as the force which opened the door to a world of catch-as-catch-can violence. In spite of the difficulty of saying anything that could not be turned against us, this group has urged that advance warning be given. If this is done, the military operation is degraded in the ways argued in Annex \_\_\_\_, depending on whether 6 or 24 hours of notice is given.

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Such a warning could not be precise in its threat. Its basic sentence might be something saying that "unless the Soviet (Cuban) Government can give immediate and unequivocal assurance that these offensive weapons (missiles and IL-28s; MIGs?) will be removed immediately, the United States Government will have to meet its own responsibilities." The rest of the message would be, in essence, a preview of the President's speech.

If this sort of warning were given, it should be given simultaneously with or shortly after initial public statement. In that case the timing of the statement from the White House should be changed accordingly.

#### Notice to Friends

It appears to us essential that advance notice of this action be given to the heads of Governments of the following countries: The United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Turkey. ~~E~~

~~E~~ The timing of such advance notice is complex. If it is early Tuesday morning in Europe it is almost dawn over Cuba. If it is late evening in Europe, it is twelve hours before dawn in Cuba. On balance the following is recommended:

A message to MacMillan, DeGaulle and Adenauer late Monday evening and to Fanfani and the Turks early Tuesday morning, and to the Japanese Tuesday afternoon local time. The

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messages to our principal Allies should rehearse basic evidence and argumentation and the messages to Italy, Japan and Turkey, and also to Great Britain, should direct attention to the particular problem of [

] which may become a hazard. The United States should not indicate any fear on its own part, but should indicate a readiness to take account of the desires of its Allies in this grave situation. (If warning is given to Khrushchev, the content of these messages should be revised, and their timing advanced)

Early on Tuesday the United States would call a meeting of the Consultative Organ of the OAS and in that Organ it would press for a two-thirds majority endorsing this remedial action.

The United States would brief the North Atlantic Council on Tuesday, perhaps through a special emissary who may also be dispatched to DeGaulle. This briefing would emphasize the great provocation of the Soviet action, the increased determination of the United States, and the real balance of strategic power.

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II - POSSIBLE WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT

Monday Evening

When information was first received of the military build-up in Cuba, the President on September 4 issued a release from the White House stating that the military build-up, although substantial, was entirely defensive. The statement then continued as follows: "There is no evidence of the presence of offensive ground-to-ground missiles; or of other significant offensive capability either in Cuban hands or under Soviet direction. Were it to be otherwise the gravest issued would arise."

On September 13, at his press conference, the President further stated as follows: "If at any time the Communist build-up in Cuba were to endanger or interfere with our security in any way, including our base at Guantanamo, our passage to the Panama Canal, our missile and space activities at Cape Canaveral, or the lives of American citizens in this country, or if Cuba should ever attempt to export its aggressive purposes by force or the threat of force against any nation in this hemisphere, or become an offensive military base of significant capacity for the Soviet Union, then this country will do whatever must be done to protect its own security and that of its Allies."

"We shall be alert, too, and fully capable of dealing swiftly with any such development. As President and Commander-

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in-Chief, I have full authority now to take such action, and I have asked the Congress to authorize me to call up reserve forces should this or any other crisis make it necessary." In addition, in answer to a question as to when the build-up would be considered offensive, he said: "I think if you read last week's statement and the statement today, I made it quite clear, particularly in last week's statement, when we talked about the presence of offensive military missile capacity or development of military base and other indications which I gave last week, all those would, of course, indicate a change in the nature of the threat."

Finally, the Congress in joint resolution adopted on September 26, resolved "That the United States is determined to prevent in Cuba the creation or use of an externally supported military capability endangering the security of the United States."

In the face of these clear and unequivocal warnings, we have just received from unimpeachable sources information that the Communist Cuban regime has now received and is well along in the process of installing a series of offensive military missiles whose range would cover practically the whole of the Continental United States as well as all of Central and Northern South America. In addition it has received a consignment of IL-28 bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons and with a range of 1200 miles, a weapon that can by no means be considered as defensive.

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This situation is not tolerable to the United States.

Accordingly, I have informed President Dorticos of Cuba of the extreme gravity with which we look upon this situation in the hope that the Cuban regime will immediately agree to the prompt dismantlement of these installations under international inspection.

I am also calling the Congress to meet in special session on Thursday to consider what further action may be necessary at that time.

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III. ANNOUNCEMENT TUESDAY A.M.

No reply having been received from yesterday's message to President Dorticos, the President has ordered the Armed Forces of the United States to remove the nuclear threat to the Americas from Cuban soil. The Air Force has commenced operations to carry out this assignment under strict instructions to utilize only conventional weapons in their attacks and to avoid, to the maximum extent possible, the infliction of civilian casualties or damage to civilian property.

The United States regrets that it was forced to the use of military force by the open defiance of its clear-cut and oft-repeated warnings. This action is strictly limited in its objective and is designed solely to remove an intolerable offensive military threat, from Cuban soil. Solely, as a defensive measure, it has been felt necessary to alert other military forces. These alert measures convey no threat or danger to any other country and have been taken solely to provide protection against unexpected contingencies. It is hoped that they may soon be discontinued; meanwhile, in order to minimize the dangers to world peace the President is asking Premier Khrushchev to meet with him as soon as possible.

The President will make a full report to the country by television at 11:00 this morning.

## IV. SYNOPSIS OF PRESIDENT'S SPEECH, TUESDAY MORNING

1. This morning I reluctantly ordered the armed forces to attack and destroy the nuclear build-up in Cuba.
2. Background of US position re offensive weapons.
3. Catalogue of offensive weapons in Cuba (possible pictures).

Further pictures to be released as soon as possible.

Faced with this situation, action became necessary both to remove the immediate offensive threat to the Americas and to make crystal clear to the Soviet Union that the United States means what it says and is prepared to defend liberty with all the means at its disposal.

This applies elsewhere in the world as well as in Cuba. I refer particularly to Berlin. The United States is fully prepared to live up to its commitments should there be any attempt to alter the situation by Military force. There should be no doubt on the part of anyone, that, in carrying out this commitment, the US will be prepared to use all the forces at its disposal.

4. This is a limited operation but it must not be permitted to recur. Accordingly, I have instructed the armed forces to prevent the delivery to Cuba of military equipment of all sorts as well as of all petroleum products since these are essential to the operation of Cuban military equipment.

5. This development in Cuba emphasizes the dangers in the present world situation. It has become essential for us to remove tensions rather than to create new ones. Accordingly, I have informed Premier Khrushchev that the United States is prepared to discuss new arrangements for deployment of nuclear forces on both sides. I have also asked him to meet with me

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6. The United States is also calling the OAS into session to report on the Cuban developments and to determine future courses of common action.

7. We are also reporting fully to the NATO Council.

8. I, as President, had the greatest reluctance to order the action that is now being carried out. I made every effort to clarify my position. But the Cuban authorities would not listen. In the face of their open defiance, action became inevitable. No time could be lost as the dangerous weapons were practically in position and ready for operation.

9. I ask the people to remain calm, go about your daily business, secure in the knowledge that our freedom-loving country will not allow its security to be undermined. To the people of Cuba, I say we have no quarrel with you--and only await the day when you can throw off the leaders who are leading you to disaster and rejoin the society of free American states.

10. To the people of the Soviet Union I say we bear you no malice. We wish to live in friendship and peace, we hope that means can be found to reduce tensions and bring about a truly peaceful world.

11. To our allies and others in the free world, we say quite forthrightly that we are prepared and ready to risk all to maintain their freedom against any aggressive attack by Communist forces.